

# Improving Cultural Competence: Connecting with American Muslims\*

United States Attorney's Office  
District of Connecticut



\* = During Non-Emergency Situations

# Mosques and Islamic Centers in Connecticut

- 
- Berlin
  - Bridgeport
  - Bristol
  - Danbury
  - East Hartford
  - Ellington
  - Groton
  - Hamden
  - Hartford
  - Meriden
  - Monroe
  - Newtown
  - Orange
  - New Britain
  - New Haven
  - Norwalk
  - Norwich
  - Stamford
  - Stratford
  - Vernon
  - Wallingford
  - Waterbury
  - West Haven
  - Westport
  - Windsor
  - Windsor Locks



# American Muslims ARE DIVERSE



# Similar Beliefs

- Islam, Christianity, and Judaism share many beliefs
  - One God (“Allah” means “God” in Arabic)
  - Prominent figures: Adam, Eve, Abraham, Noah, Moses, Mary, Jesus, and others
  - Revelation and Holy Books: Torah, Gospels, and Qur’an
  - Day of Judgment

# ISLAM 101: COMPARING TERMS

	ISLAM	CHRISTIANITY	JUDAISM
Name of Religion	Islam	Christianity	Judaism
Follower of Religion	Muslim	Christian	Jew
Holy Book	Qur'an	Bible	Torah
Place of Worship	Mosque or Masjid	Church	Synagogue/Temple
Clergy	Imam	Priest/Minister	Rabbi
Holy Day	Friday	Sunday	Saturday



# ISLAM 101: MORE TERMINOLOGY

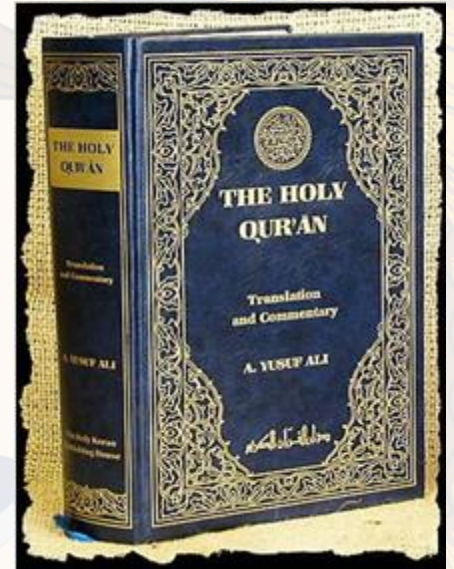
- Jummah: Friday prayers
- Insha-Allah: “God willing”
- Allah-u-Akbar: “God is great”
- Ramadan: holy month of fasting, introspection, and prayer (approximately June 6 – July 5, 2016)
  - Ninth month of lunar calendar, so Ramadan is a different month each year

# ISLAM 101: PILLARS

- Faith: Belief in only one God (Allah); Muhammad is the messenger of God
- Prayer: Five times a day (early am, mid-am, late pm, sunset, night)
- Charity: Payment of 2.5% of excess wealth to poor
- Fasting: from dawn to dusk during month of Ramadan for those physically able
- Hajj: pilgrimage to Mecca (once in lifetime) during first ten days of twelfth month of lunar calendar

# ISLAM 101: QUR'AN CONSIDERATIONS

- Treat respectfully like any holy text
- Do not throw, deface, place something on top of, or place on the floor
- It is common to keep the Qur'an in purses, bags, cars





# ISLAM 101: MOSQUE CONSIDERATIONS

- Tips here are for non-emergency situations
- Treat respectfully, like all places of worship
- May have separate entrances for men and women
- Remove shoes before entering
- Typically has an open, carpeted space without chairs or pews
- Will have separate prayer areas for men and women

# ISLAM 101: MOSQUE CONSIDERATIONS

- Dress code: modest
- May see “wudu” (sink or bathtub area for cleansing feet and hands before prayer)
- Avoid walking in front of praying people
- Avoid taking dogs inside if possible
- May have school or community center attached
- Friday is the day for Jummah prayers
  - Larger gatherings at mosques around midday
- During Ramadan, gatherings at mosques at many times of day and night

# ATTIRE FOR MUSLIMS

- Both men and women dress modestly
- Men may wear skull cap
- Different styles of female head coverings

## THE EYES HAVE IT

### Hijab

General term for modest dress code. Also refers specifically to scarf which covers the hair



### Niqab

Veil that covers face, showing only eyes



### Burka

Full face and body covering, associated with Afghanistan



### Chador

A full body cloak, most common in Iran



### Khimar

Covers the hair, neck and shoulders





# TIPS: MUSLIM HOME

- Muslim woman may take time to cover herself before answering door
- Muslim woman may be more comfortable talking to female officer or may want male relative present if speaking with male officers
- Both Muslim men and women may not shake hands with members of the opposite sex
- Lack of eye contact may be cultural
- Safety first: just explain and be respectful

# TIPS: LARGE GATHERINGS

- During worship times, Ramadan, and Eid holiday (end of Ramadan), may see large gatherings of Muslims in traditional dress
- Ask to speak with imam or leader of group
- Request that local mosques alert police to dates and times of large events
- Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) date in 2016 is around September 11; may see groups in traditional dress traveling together at airport



**FRIENDLY GREETING:**

**“Asalaam alaikum”**

**“Peace be upon you”**

**AH-SAL'AM AL-'AYE-COOM**



The background of the slide features a large, faint, light blue seal of the United States Department of Justice. The seal is circular, with a rope-like border. Inside the border, the words "DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE" are written in a large, serif font at the top, and "OFFICE" is at the bottom. In the center of the seal is an eagle with its wings spread, perched on a shield with red and white stripes. The eagle holds an olive branch in its right talon and arrows in its left. The Latin motto "QUI PRO DOMINA JUSTITIA SEQUITUR" is inscribed around the eagle. A solid blue horizontal bar is at the bottom of the slide.

**QUESTIONS?**